

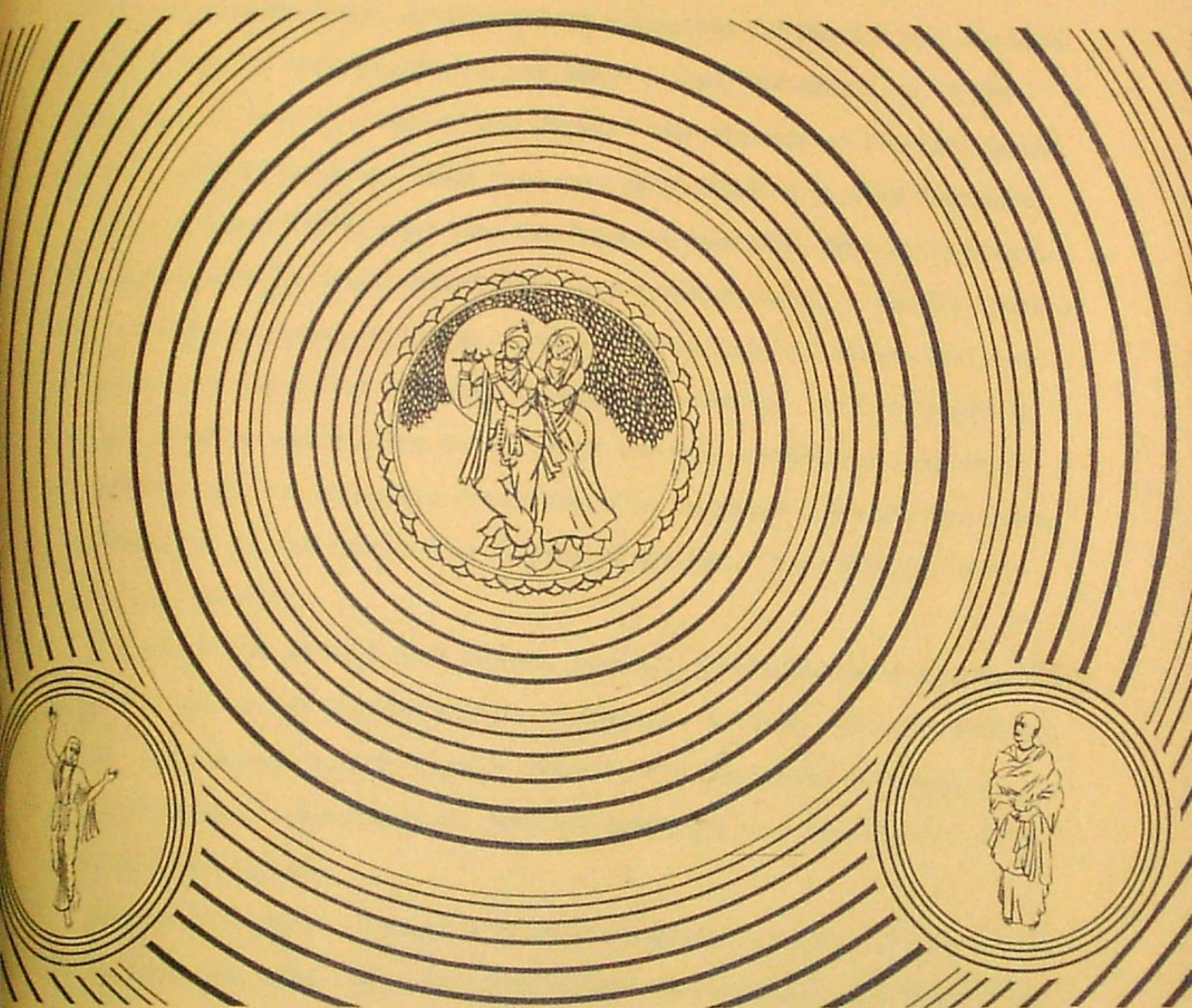
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BACK TO GODHEAD



INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS, INC.

By the Grace of Krishna--

March has already been an eventful month for all three centers of the Society-- in San Francisco, Montreal and New York.

Swami Bhaktivedanta led kirtan at Stanford University in Palo Alto, Calif. to the delight of some 400 stomping, dancing, chanting students. The local Palo Alto newspaper caught up the student enthusiasm for Swamiji and the Hare Krishna Mantra by reporting that a new dance called "The Swami," a "trance dance," has replaced the "twist" and "frug." The students at Stanford danced for 70 minutes with fervor, hands held over their heads a la Lord Chaitanya.

Even more successful have been the Sunday Golden Gate Park kirtans in San Francisco which have been led by Swamiji and devotees weekly. Banners, kettle drum, cymbals, trumpets, mridangam, bongos, tambourines and voices have been attracting some 500-700 at the park kirtans every Sunday. A "love feast" in the San Francisco temple every Sunday after the park kirtans has also been appreciated. The San Francisco center has also initiated a Pacific Ocean Sunset Kirtan held at the beach every Tuesday at sundown. Lord Krishna freely provides all splendor.

The new center at 3720 Park Avenue, Montreal, Canada has been throwing Mantra Rock Dances for temple benefit, utilizing local rock and roll bands and lights. The Mahamantra, Kirtanananda reports, "is being made an integral part of the dance." San Francisco devotees have also been chanting the Mahamantra at local dances.

The New York center is engaged in negotiating for a large building in the downtown Manhattan area. This building would be an important spiritual center for New York and the nation, and as such warrants the work and contributions not only of full-time devotees but of all people interested in spiritual rejuvenation in America. HARE KRISHNA, HARE KRISHNA, KRISHNA KRISHNA, HARE HARE, HARE RAMA, HARE RAMA, RAMA RAMA, HARE HARE.

-- The Editors

FROM THE LECTURES OF SWAMI A. C. BHAKTIVEDANTA

Notes transcribed from a lecture given December 21, 1966.

Lord Chaitanya is describing the Leela Avatars. There are innumerable avatars: Rama Nrishingha, Kalki, etc. In Srimad Bhagavatam some names are mentioned. All the incarnations, and especially the Leela avatars, descend to settle disturbances caused by demons.

There are, for these purposes, two types of men: devotees and demons. The devas (devotees) are demigods; they are completely Krishna conscious, and are entrusted with universal management. The demons, or asuras (atheists) are meant for creating disturbances. When the number of asuras greatly increases and life becomes intolerable for the devas, then the Lord comes in the form of one of His plenary expansions. As stated in the Bhagavad Gita, "Just to deliver the faithful and to annihilate the unfaithful, I come in every millenium." This is the function and purpose of the Leela avatars.

Lord Chaitanya tells Sanatan Goswami that He will now speak of incarnations of material qualities, the Guna Avatars. Each quality of material nature is controlled by the Supreme Lord in His expansions as Vishnu, Who is a full plenary expansion of God with 94% of the known godly qualities; Lord Shiva, a pure devotee, has 84% of the godly qualities, and Brahma, who is a living entity (like ourselves) with 78% of the godly qualities. Each one is a part and parcel of the Lord (Krishna). The guna avatars are in charge of material affairs. Lord Shiva is the avatar of Ignorance-- but he is not ignorant, just as a prison official visiting the prison is not subject to its rules. Similarly, Brahma creates and initiates-- passion comes from Brahma. Vishnu maintains these and all plural eternal in the material sphere-- but He is the singular eternal.

What is the constitution of Brahma? There are innumerable living enti-

ties. Many of them are devotees, but they want to enjoy the material world and take favor from God. Brahma is in this position. Sometimes Krishna Himself becomes Brahma, when suitable living entities are not available. Just as a diamond has the power to illuminate, its power to shine being derived from the sun, so the powerful creator Brahma inherits power from the Supreme Lord. Brahma's power is tiny in comparison; it is not originally luminous like the sun. This material universe is created by him at certain intervals, stays for some time, and then is destroyed.

As with Brahma, sometimes when Lord Shiva is not available, Krishna accepts management of the modes of ignorance. Shiva is a direct expansion of God, but because He is in the department of ignorance he is not quite God. Shiva means auspicious. His business is destruction. There is a popular statue of Shiva dancing, surrounded by the fires of annihilation. Material energy is under the control of Shiva. Shiva is the father and material energy (Durga) is the mother. Because, unlike Krishna, Shiva has this connection with illusory energy, Shiva is not quite God. He stands between the living entity and Krishna. Lord Chaitanya quotes the Brahma Samhita on Lord Shiva: "If you mix something sour with milk, it becomes yogurt; such is the difference between Krishna and Shiva." Once made into yogurt it cannot be changed back into milk, although it has the same constitution. Those who worship Shiva cannot derive the same benefits as those in Krishna consciousness. Shiva is not different from Krishna, but he is altered by his association with matter-- as he takes on the jobs of destruction and tamas (ignorance) management.

Vishnu is never in touch with material energy. Vishnu is beyond the material worlds. Sankaracharya accepted this Supreme position of Narayana (Vishnu), although he was an impersonalist. Therefore, Vishnu's Body is Sat-Chit-Ananda, full of knowledge, eternal, and blissful.

THE TEACHINGS OF LORD CHAITANYA

by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami

In the instruction of Lord Chaitanya to Sanatan Goswami we can understand the Science of God in the matter of His transcendental Form, His opulences, and His devotional service-- for everything is being described to Sanatan Goswami by the Lord Himself. At the time Sanatan fell at the feet of the Lord and with great humility asked about his real identity. He spoke as follows: "I am born of a lower family, my associations are all abominable, and I am fallen and the most wretched of mankind. I was suffering in the dark well of material enjoyment, and I never knew the actual goal of my life. I do not know what is beneficial to me although in the ordinary way I am what is known as a great learned man; in fact, I am so much of a fool that I even accept that I am a learned man. You have accepted me as your servant and you have delivered me from the entanglement of material life; now you can tell me what my duty is in this liberated state of life." In other words, we see by this plea that liberation is not the final word of perfection; there must be activities in liberation. Sanatan clearly asks, "You have saved me from the entanglement of material existence; now after liberation, what is my duty? Kindly explain it to me." Sanatan further inquired, "Who am I? Why are the three-fold miseries always giving me trouble? Finally, tell me how I will be relieved from this material entanglement? I do not know how to question about spiritual advancement of life, but I beg that you kindly, mercifully let me know everything that I should know."

This is the process of acceptance of a spiritual master by the disciple. One should approach a spiritual master and humbly submit to him and then inquire from him about one's spiritual progress. The Lord was pleased by Sanatan's submissive behavior and He replied to him as follows: "You are already

benedicted by Lord Krishna, therefore you know everything and you are free from all miseries of material existence." The Lord further replied that because Sanatan was in Krishna Consciousness, naturally, by the grace of Krishna, he was already conversant with everything, but, "Because you are a humble devotee you are asking me to confirm what is already realized by you. This is very nice." These are the characteristics of a true devotee. In the Narada sutra it is said that one who is very serious about developing his Krishna Consciousness, by the grace of the Lord, has his desire for understanding Krishna very soon fulfilled. The Lord said, "You are a suitable person for protecting the devotional service of the Lord, therefore it is my duty to instruct you in the science of God, and I will explain to you one of the orders."

It is the duty of a disciple approaching a spiritual master to enquire about his constitutional position. In response to that spiritual process, Sanatan has already asked, "What am I and why am I suffering from threefold miseries?" The threefold miseries are called adhyatmic, abhibhautic, adhidaivic. Adhyatmic means pertaining to the body and mind, therefore there are two kinds of miseries suffered by the living entity: sometimes he is suffering bodily, and sometimes he is distressed mentally-- both are miseries. We are put into miseries even in the womb of our mother. And there are also many forms of misery that take advantage of our delicate body and give us pain. Miseries inflicted by other living entities are called abhibhautic. There are many living entities such as bugs born of eggs, that give us miseries while we are sleeping in bed. There are many living entities, like cockroaches, that sometimes give us pain, and there are other living entities born on different kinds of planets, and they also give us miseries. So far as adhidaivic miseries are concerned, they are offered by the demigods from the higher planets. For instance, sometimes we suffer from serious cold weather, sometimes we suffer by the thunderbolt, sometimes earthquakes, tornadoes, droughts and all other natural disasters.

So we are always in either of these three kinds of miseries. Sanatan's enquiry was, "What is the position of the living entities? Why are they always put into these three kinds of miseries?" Sanatan has admitted his weakness; although he was known by the mass of people as a great learned man (and actually he was a highly learned scholar in the Sanskrit language)-- and although he accepted the designation of a very learned man given him by the mass of people, yet he did not actually know what his constitutional position was, and why he was subjected to the threefold miseries.

The necessity of approaching a spiritual master is not a fashion, but is for him who is seriously conscious of the material miseries and who wants to get out of them; it is the duty of such a person to approach the spiritual master. We find similar circumstances in the Bhagavad Gita. When Arjuna was perplexed by so many problems, whether to fight or not to fight, he accepted Lord Krishna as his spiritual master. There also it was a case of the Supreme Spiritual Master instructing Arjuna about the constitutional position of the living entity. In the Bhagavad Gita we are informed that the constitutional position of the individual entity is spirit soul; he is not matter, therefore as spirit soul he is part and parcel of the Supreme Soul, Absolute Truth, Personality of Godhead. We also learn that it is the duty of the spirit soul to surrender, for only then can he be happy. The last instruction of the Bhagavad Gita is that the spirit soul is to surrender completely unto the Supreme Soul, Krishna, and in that way realize happiness. Here also, Lord Chaitanya in answering the questions of Sanatan is repeating the same truth, but without giving him information of the spirit soul which is described in the Gita. He begins from the point where Krishna ended his instruction. It is calculated by great devotees that Lord Chaitanya is Krishna Himself. And as He ended His instruction in the Gita, from that point he begins His instruction again, to Sanatan. The Lord said to Sanatan, "Your constitutional position is that you

are pure living soul. This material body is not the identity of your real self, neither is your mind your real identity, nor your intelligence, nor is false ego the real identity for self. Your identity is that you are eternal servitor of the Supreme Lord, Krishna. Your position is that you are transcendental. Superior energy of Krishna is spiritual in constitution, and inferior external energy is material. In other words, you are between the material energy and the spiritual energy, therefore your position is marginal. In other words, you belong to the marginal potency of Krishna. You are simultaneously one with and different from Krishna because in a sense you are spirit, therefore you are not different from Krishna; but because you are only a minute particle of Krishna, you are therefore different from Krishna."

This simultaneous oneness and difference always exists in the relationship between the living entities and the Supreme Lord. From the marginal position of the living entity, this "simultaneously one and different" is understood. The living entity is just like a molecular part of sunshine, whereas Krishna is compared to the blazing and shining sun. Lord Chaitanya compared the living entities to the blazing sparks from the fire, and the Supreme Lord to the blazing fire of the sun. The Lord cites in this connection a verse from Vishnu Purana in which it is stated that everything that is manifested within this cosmic world is but a different energy of the Supreme Lord. For example, as the fire emanating from one place exhibits its illumination and heat all around, similarly the Lord, although situated in one place in the spiritual world, is manifesting His different energies everywhere, and the whole world of cosmic representation is but different manifestations of His energy. The energy of the Supreme Lord is transcendental and spiritual, and the living entities also belong to that energy, but there is another energy which is called hard-working material energy, which is covered by the cloud of ignorance and therefore divided into the three modes of material nature. Lord Chaitanya quoted from Vishnu Purana that all inconceivable energies are there in the Supreme Personality of

ceivable energy is there in the Supreme Lord, and the whole cosmic manifestation is acting due to the same inconceivable energy of the Supreme Lord. For example, as the heat of the fire is all perceivable, similarly the inconceivable energy of the Supreme Lord is always perceivable by an intelligent person.

The Lord says that the living entities are also known as ksetrajna, or "knower of the field of activities." In the Gita in the 13th Chapter the living entity is described as ksetrajna, the body is described as the field of activities, and the living entity is the knower of that field. Although the living entity is constitutionally conversant with spiritual energy, or has the potency of understanding, he is being covered by the material energy, and he consequently understands this body to be himself. This is called false ego. In material existence, under this false ego, the bewildered living entity is changing his different bodies and suffering different kinds of miseries. The knowledge of understanding his true position is present to various extents in different varieties of living entities. In other words, it is to be understood that the living entity is part and parcel of the spiritual energy of the Supreme Lord. The material energy is inferior energy, and therefore man has the potency to uncover this material energy and utilize the spiritual energy. It is stated in the Bhagavad Gita that the superior energy is covered by the inferior energy. Due to this covering, the living entity is subjected to the miseries of the material world, and, according to the different degrees of obscuration, is proportionately suffering material miseries. Those who are a little enlightened are suffering less, but on the whole, everyone is subjected to material miseries on account of being covered by the material energy. The Lord also quoted from the Gita, 7th Chapter, in which it is stated that earth, water, fire, air, sky, mind, intelligence and ego, all combine together to form the inferior energy of the Supreme Lord. But the Superior Energy is the real identity of the living entity; on account of that energy the whole material

world is working. The cosmic manifestation, made of material energy or material elements, has no power to act unless it is moved by the Superior energy, the living entity. So actually, the conditional life of the living entity is forgetfulness of his relationship with the Supreme Lord in Superior energy. When that relationship is forgotten, conditional life is the result. Only when man revives his real identity, that of eternal servitor of the Lord, does he become liberated.

(PART II OF LORD CHAITANYA'S TEACHING WILL APPEAR IN NEXT ISSUE)

Last night I saw
in a dream orchard
hanging from the branches of the trees
in place of fruit
clusters of golden finger cymbals
which tingled in the breezes
as if they were thousands of tiny frozen lotus flowers
shimmering and tingling;

and flocks of devotees in streaming yellow robes
danced up and down between the rows of trees
with upraised arms that looked like the curved necks
of swans
and heads tilted, and eyes that looked lost
because they had found
bliss
which only Krishna can bestow
to His pure devotees;

and beneath one of the trees sat Swamiji
as if enthroned
beating His drum intently
smiling, placid

and chanting
HARE KRISHNA
while all the yellow-robed marionettes swirled about him
chanting
HARE KRISHNA
and the timbriled trees tingled from each breath of Krishna.

Oh Krishna, if in my next thousand births
this dream is all You reveal to me of Your Kingdom,
then it would be enough.

--Brahmananda Das Brahmachary
(Bruce Scharf)



INVOCATION

Meditation on the Gita

by Sri Shankaracharya

Purports by A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami
Text rendered into verse
by Hayagriva Das Brahmachary

(Sri Shankaracharya-- or Shankara-- is considered to be an incarnation of Lord Shiva, according to Padma Puranam. Appearing in India in the 6th century A.D., he single-handedly drove the Buddhist philosophy out of India and re-established Vedic culture, all in his short lifetime of 32 years. Although he took up the impersonalist guise to better battle the Buddhists-- impersonalism is much akin to Buddhism-- the commentary rendered below, as well as other writings, reveal him to be, in actuality, devoted to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Krishna. Shankara's most famous treatise is Vivekachudamani, and his other works include Sarirak Vhasya and Prayers for Krishna.)

(1)

O Bhagavad Gita,
Through Thy eighteen chapters
Thou showerest upon Man
The immortal nectar
Of the Wisdom of the Absolute.
O Blessed Gita,
By Thee Lord Krishna Himself
Enlightened Arjuna.
Afterward, the ancient sage Vyasa
Included Thee in the Mahabharata.
O Loving Mother,
Destroyer of Man's rebirth
Into the darkness of this mortal world,
Upon Thee I meditate.

(2)

Salutations to thee, O Vyasa.
Thou art of mighty intellect,
And thine eyes
Are large as the petals
Of the full-blown lotus.
It was thou
Who brightened this lamp of Wisdom,
Filling it with the oil
Of the Mahabharata.

PURPORT

Srimad Sankaracharya was an impersonalist from the materialist point of view. But he never denied the spiritual form known as Sat-Chit-Ananda Vigrata or the Eternal all-blissful Form of Knowledge which existed before the material creation. When he spoke of Supreme Brahman as impersonal he did not mean that the Lord's Sat-Chit-Ananda Form was to be confused with a material conception of Personality. In the very beginning of his commentary on the Gita, he maintains that Narayana, the Supreme Lord, is transcendental to the material creation. The Lord existed before the creation as transcendental Personality, and He has nothing to do with the material Personality. Lord Krishna is the same Supreme Personality and He has no connection with the material body. He descends in His spiritual eternal Form, but foolish people mistake His body as like unto ours. Sankara's preaching of impersonalism is especially meant for teaching foolish persons who consider Krishna to be an ordinary man composed of matter.

No body would care to read the Gita if it had been spoken by a material man, and certainly Vyasadeva wouldn't have even bothered to incorporate it into the history of the Mahabharata. According to the above verses, Mahabharata is the History of the Ancient World and Vyasadeva is the writer of this great epic. Bhagavad Gita is identical with Krishna; and because Krishna is the Absolute Supreme Personality of Godhead, there is no difference between Krishna and His words. Therefore the Gita is as worshipable as Lord Krishna Himself, both being Absolute. One who hears Bhagavad Gita "as is" actually hears the words directly from the lotus lips of the Lord. But unfortunate persons say that the Gita is too antiquated for the modern man who wants to find out God by speculation or meditation.

(3)

I salute Thee, O Krishna,
 O Thou, Who art the refuge
 Of ocean-born Lakshmi
 And all who take refuge
 At Thy lotus Feet.
 Thou art indeed
 The wish-fulfilling tree
 For Thy devotee.
 Thy one hand holds a staff
 For driving cows,
 And Thy other hand is raised--
 The thumb touching the tip
 Of Thy forefinger,
 Indicating Divine Knowledge.
 Salutations to Thee, O Supreme Lord,
 For Thou art the Milker
 Of the ambrosia of the Gita.

PURFORT

Srimad Sankaracharya explicitly says, "You fools, just worship Govinda and that Bhagavad Gita spoken by Narayana Himself," yet foolish people still conduct their research work to find out Narayan; consequently they are wretched and they waste their time for nothing. Narayana is never wretched nor Daridra; rather, He is worshipped by the Goddess of Fortune, Lakshmi, as well as all living entities. Sankara declared himself to be "Brahman," but he admits Narayana or Krishna to be the Supreme Personality Who is beyond the material creation. He offers his respects to Krishna as the Supreme Brahman or Param Brahman because He (Krishna) is worshipable by everyone. Only the fools and enemies of Krishna who cannot understand what Bhagavad Gita is (though they make commentaries on it) say, "It is not the personal Krishna to whom we have to surrender ourselves utterly, but to the unborn, beginningless Eternal who speaks through Krishna." Fools rush in where angels fear to tread. Whereas Sankara, the greatest of the impersonalists, offers his due respects to Krishna and His book Bhagavad Gita, the foolish say that "it is not to the Personal Krishna." Such unenlightened people do not know that Krishna is Absolute and

that there is no difference between His inside and outside. The difference between inside and outside is experienced in the dual material world. In the Absolute World there is no such difference because in the Absolute everything is spiritual (Sat-Chit-Ananda), and Narayana or Krishna belongs to the Absolute World. In the Absolute World there is only the factual Personality, and there is no distinction between body and soul.

(4)

The Upanishads
Are as a herd of cows,
Lord Krishna, Son of a cowherd,
Is their Milker,
Arjuna is the calf,
The supreme nectar of the Gita
Is the milk,
And the wise man
Of purified intellect
Is the drinker.

PURPORT

Unless one understands spiritual variegatedness, one cannot understand the transcendental pastimes of the Lord. In the Brahma Samhita it is said that Krishna's Name, Form, Quality, Pastimes, Entourage and Paraphernalia are all anandachinmoyarasa--- in short, everything of His transcendental association is of the same composition of spiritual bliss, knowledge and eternity. There is no end to His Name, Form, etc., unlike the material world where all things have their end. As stated in the Bhagavad Gita, only fools deride Him, whereas it is Sankara, the greatest impersonalist, who worships Him, His cows and His pastimes as the Son of Vasudeva and pleasure of Devaki.

(5)

Thou Son of Vasudeva,
Destroyer of the demons Kamsa and Chanura,
Thou Supreme Bliss of Mother Devaki,
O Thou Guru of the Universe,
Teacher of the Worlds,
Thee, O Krishna, I salute.

PURPORT

Sankara describes Him as the Son of Vasudeva and Devaki. Does he mean thereby that he is worshipping an ordinary material man? He worships Krishna because he knows that Krishna's birth and activities are all supernatural. As stated in the Bhagavad Gita (4th Chapter), Krishna's birth and activities are mysterious and transcendental and therefore only the devotees of Krishna can know them perfectly. Sankara was not such a fool that he would accept Krishna as an ordinary man and at the same time offer Him all devotional obeisances, knowing Him as the son of Devaki and Vasudeva. According to Bhagavad Gita, only by knowing the transcendental birth and activities of Krishna can one attain liberation by acquiring a spiritual form like Krishna. There are five different kinds of liberations. One who merges into the spiritual auras of Krishna, known as impersonal Brahman effulgence, does not fully develop his spiritual body. But one who fully develops his spiritual existence becomes an associate of Narayana or Krishna in different spiritual abodes. One who enters into the abode of Narayana develops a spiritual Form exactly like Narayana (four-handed) and one who enters into the highest spiritual abode of Krishna, known as Goloka Vrindaban, develops a spiritual Form of two hands like Krishna. Sankara, as an incarnation of Lord Shiva, knows all these spiritual existences, but he did not disclose them to his then Buddhist followers because it was impossible for them to know about the spiritual world. Lord Buddha preached that void is the ultimate goal, so how could His followers understand spiritual variegatedness? Therefore Sankara said Brahma Satya Jagat Mithya, or material variegatedness is false but spiritual variegatedness is fact. In the Padma Puranam Lord Shiva has admitted that He had to preach the philosophy of Maya or illusion in the Kaliyuga as another edition of the "void" philosophy of Buddha. He had to do this by the order of the Lord for specific reasons. He, however, disclosed his real mind by recommending that people worship Krishna for no one can be

saved simply by mental speculations composed of word jugglery and grammatical maneuvers. Shankara instructs further: Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam Mudhamate; Prapte sannihite khalu marane nahi nahi, raksati du krim karano. "You intellectual fools, just worship Govinda, just worship Govinda, just worship Govinda. Your grammatical knowledge and word jugglery will not save you at the time of death."

(6)

Of that terrifying river
Of the battlefield of Kurukshetra
Over which the Pandavas victoriously crossed,
Bhishma and Drona were as the high banks,
Jayadratha as the river's water,
The King of Gandhara the blue water-lily,
Salya the shark, Kripa the current,
Karna the mighty waves,
Ashvatthama and Vikarna the dread alligators,
And Duryodhana the very whirlpool--
But Thou, O Krishna, wast the Ferryman!

(7)

May the spotless lotus of the Mahabharata
That grows on the waters
Of the words of Vyasa
And of which the Bhagavad Gita
Is the irresistably sweet fragrance
And its tales of heroes
The full blown petals
Fully opened by the talk of Lord Hari,
Who destroys the sins
Of Kaliyuga,
And on which daily light
The nectar-seeking souls,
As so many bees
Swarming joyously--
May this lotus of the Mahabharata
Bestow on us the Highest Good.

(8)

Salutations to Lord Krishna,
The Embodiment of Supreme Bliss,
By Whose grace and compassion
The dumb become eloquent
And the lame scale mountains--
Him I salute!

PURPORT

Foolish followers of foolish speculators cannot understand the meaning of offering salutations to Lord Krishna, the embodiment of Bliss. Sankara himself offered his salutations to Lord Krishna so that some of his intelligent followers might understand the real fact by the example set by their great Master Sankara, the incarnation of Lord Shiva. But there are many obstinant followers of Sankara who refuse to offer their salutations to Lord Krishna, and instead mislead innocent persons by injecting materialism into Bhagavad Gita and confusing innocent readers by their commentaries and consequently the readers never have the opportunity to become blessed by offering salutations to Lord Krishna, the cause of all causes. The greatest disservice to humanity is to keep mankind in the darkness about the science of Krishna or Krishna Consciousness by distorting the sense of the Gita.

(9)

Salutations to that Supreme Shining One
 Whom the creator Brahma, Varuna,
 Indra, Rudra, Marut and all divine beings
 Praise with hymns,
 Whose glories are sung
 By the verses of the Vedas,
 Of Whom the singers of Sama sing
 And of Whose glories the Upanishads
 Proclaim in full choir,
 Whom the Yogins see
 With their minds absorbed
 In perfect meditation,
 And of Whom all the hosts
 Of gods and demons
 Know not the limitations.
 To Him, the Supreme God Krishna, be all salutations--
 Him we salute! Him we salute! Him we salute!

PURPORT

By recitation of the ninth verse of his meditation quoted from Srimad Bhagavatam, Sankara has indicated that Lord Krishna is worshipable by one and all, including himself. He gives hints to materialists, impersonalists, mental speculators, "void" philosophers and all other candidates subjected to the

punishment of material miseries-- just offer salutations to Lord Krishna, Who is worshipped by Brahma, Shiva, Varuna, Indra and all other demigods. He has not mentioned however the name of Vishnu because Vishnu is identical with Krishna. The Vedas and the Upanishads are meant for understanding the process by which one can surrender unto Krishna. The yogins try to see Him (Krishna) within themselves by meditation. In other words, it is for all the demigods and demons who do not know where the ultimate end is that Sankara teaches, and he especially instructs the demons and the fools to offer salutations to Krishna and His words, the Bhagavad Gita, by following his footprints. Only by such acts will the demons be benefited, not by misleading their innocent followers by so called mental speculations or showbottle meditations. Sankara directly offers salutations to Krishna as if to show the fools, who are searching after light, that here is the light like the sun. But the fallen demons are like owls that will not open their eyes on account of their fear of the sunlight itself. These owls will never open their eyes to see the sublime light of Krishna and His words the Bhagavad Gita. They will, however, comment on the Gita with their closed owl-eyes to mislead their unfortunate readers and followers. Sankara however discloses the light to his less intelligent followers and shows that Bhagavad Gita and Krishna is the only source of light. This is all to teach the sincere seekers of Truth to offer salutation to Lord Krishna and thus surrender unto Him without misgivings. That is the highest perfection of life and that is the highest teaching of Sankara, the great learned scholar whose teachings drove the void-philosophy of Buddha out of India, the land of knowledge. Om Tat Sat

KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS IN AMERICAN POETRY

by Hayagriva Das Brahmachary
(Howard Wheeler)

PART I: Emerson

In the past 130 years the United States has swiftly travelled a long way down the road of materialism and atheism and has done a great deal in bringing the rest of the world down that road with them. It is a dead end road, but anyone jumping off that bumbling, rambling bandwagon is likely to encounter squatting along the roadside as fine a company of transcendental "bums" as one could ever want to meet-- Emerson, Thoreau, Miss Emily Dickinson, Whitman, and "roaring boy" Hart Crane. There are some others, but these are the principle American transcendental waysiders who keep their fires of love and canned beans of joy and bliss warm for the hungry, wearied traveller.

There is little doubt in the minds of most truly intelligent men that America has been betrayed by the money-hungry, power-hungry atheist class of men. They have initiated that rambling bandwagon of capitalism that is presently wending its merry way to hell under the banners of Progress, Prosperity, Materialism, Power, and Sense Enjoyment. Even the countries that have previously boasted considerable God-consciousness, such as India, are now scrambling to get on this bandwagon. As a result, the devotees of the Supreme Lord are feeling more isolated and generally "out of it" socially. They lock their doors, close their windows, and chant softly in order not to disturb their atheist neighbors. At least this is the case in the big American cities. There is no transcendental hero or bearded bard on Fifth Avenue sounding his "barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world." The hollow men with heads of straw are holding the wagon reins, and even a whisper frightens them.

This calamity is largely due to there never having been sufficiently powerful spiritual leaders in America. Although some of the early settlers came to this country seeking religious freedom, the New World soon came to represent a challenge of material conquest-- gold and land-- rather than a spiritual promise. The Christian Church was imported from Europe, and spasmodically-- with Jonathan Edwards, Edward Taylor, and the revivalists of the 1830's and 50's-- the air was surcharged with spirituality. But after the Civil War this country began to ascend the ladder of Material Progress: the bumbling, rambling bandwagon started rolling down the open road to chaos, and the sages started jumping off. Since then the real spiritual gurus have been chased out, killed, or cancelled amid the waves of official materialist propaganda, or perhaps given quaint roles in the Great American Circus. What great poets and sages America has given birth to have had to attain their realization in a secular way, and with God's help and grace. With many it was a lonely battle-- there were no systems planned for them. For the American, the cosmic way to the spiritual universe was uncharted, and the few who managed to make their ways to it were often eccentric poets, polite mendicants, hermetic spinsters, mad geniuses-- in short, the American "transcendental bums."

From a spiritual point of view, India is most fortunate in its parampara system of God-realization, a system of disciplic succession stemming from Brahma, the creator-god. This system utilizes the guru-brahmachary (student) principle of disseminating transcendental knowledge from one generation to another.

Krishna speaks of this kind of system in the Gita:

This eternal yoga I taught to Vivasvat (the Sun god); Vivasvat taught it to Manu (the father of mankind); and Manu taught it to Ikshvaku (ancestor of the earth-warriors). Thus handed down from one to another, it became known to the royal sages. But through long lapse of time, this yoga has been lost to the world. (Gita, IV/1-2)

To re-establish this yoga on earth, Krishna spoke the Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna. In the West, the best example that can be given of disciplic succession

is the Roman Catholic Church which traces its papal history directly from Christ and St. Peter, the first Vicar of Rome. Such systems are useful, especially for guiding the mass of people who look to higher authorities in spiritual matters. The dangers of such a system are also obvious: the system may become regimentalized, it may deviate from the original teachings, it may become corrupt and die, it may become narrow and secular-- in which cases the parampara system stumbles over itself and deals a death blow to God-consciousness. The system is legitimate, but man is frail and subject to error.

There was never such a system in America. America is a new country-- not even 200 years old-- a baby compared to Vedic culture and civilization. The saints, sages and poets of this country do not generally work out their salvation or progress in God consciousness through the parampara system, or, for that matter, through any orthodox religious system. Many seem to have been directly favored by the Supreme Who endowed them with prophetic powers and Who gave them poetic powers with which to praise Him and direct grace by which to attain Him. In fact, direct revelation-- always the Supreme's gracious gift-- seemed natural in a country where individualism and the new, free man were spiritual ideals. One often hears in Whitman and other transcendentalists the sigh of relief for their release from the rotting philosophic, literary and religious traditions of Europe. And the Supreme Lord seems to have taken many of them by the hand, showing them how to "celebrate" Him and justify His ways to man. God is not limited and neither are His ways, and although man may be confined to stringent systems and rules, He is beyond all rules and reveals Himself to whomever He pleases. The tendency of many religionists to place the Supreme under the regulations of their religions is vain and silly.

The Supreme Lord has been directly praised by many great poets in the West-- notably Dante, the English metaphysical poets, St. John of the Cross, Milton and Blake-- great Christian poets who managed to utilize the orthodox

terminology of religion and the Bible as the basis of their poetry. Other poets, although secular in their approach, wrote of the Absolute in different ways, often using the medium of Nature. This is the case for Wordsworth in his famous "Ode: Intimations of Immortality," and Keats' reciprocal serenade between himself and the Supersoul in "Ode to a Nightingale." Byron in "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage" uses the ocean as a symbol of the Absolute, and it is easy to see Krishna as Coleridge's Kubla Khan. The "unseen presence" of Shelley's West Wind is addressed as "Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere; Destroyer and preserver." In fact, one might say that all the major English poets (especially of the 19th century) had to plug into the Supreme Consciousness for their inspiration.

In America, the poets' Krishna or cosmic consciousness was given a boost by the "transcendentalist" movement in the early 19th century. Prior to this time, Edward Taylor (1645-1729), a New England Puritan poet, wrote excellent metaphysical poetry in praise of Christ. No major force emerges, however, between Taylor and Emerson, the first superior literary mind of the 19th century.

In his introduction to Nature, Emerson writes:

The foregoing generations beheld God and nature face to face; we, through their eyes. Why should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe? Why should not we have a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition, and a religion by revelation to us, and not the history of theirs. The sun shines today. There are new lands, new men, new thoughts.

This is a capsule statement of the zeit-geist catching hold in the literary circles of New England during the 1830's-- a new land, a new man, a new relation to God. This relationship to God is intimately tied up with the land and Nature which serve as springboards into the realms of the eternal. Emerson describes his mystical experiences in this way:

Standing on the bare ground-- my head bathed by the blithe air and uplifted into infinite space-- all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eyeball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part and parcel of God. The name of the nearest friend sounds then foreign and accidental: to be brothers, to be acquaintances, master or servant, is then a trifle and a disturbance. I am the lover of un-

contained and immortal beauty. (From Nature)

Emerson was also aware of attempts to attain this cosmic consciousness by abortive, artificial means:

It is a secret which every intellectual man quickly learns, that beyond the energy of his possessed and conscious intellect he is capable of a new energy (as of an intellect doubled on itself) by abandonment to the nature of things; that beside his privacy of power as an individual man, there is a great public power on which he can draw, by unlocking, at all risks, his human doors, and suffering the ethereal tides to roll and circulate through him; then he is caught up into the life of the Universe, his speech is thunder, his thought is law, and his words are universally intelligible as the plants and animals.... For if in any manner we can stimulate this instinct, new passages are opened for us into nature; the mind flows into and through things hardest and highest, and the metamorphosis is possible. (From Essays, 2nd Series, "The Poet")

Regarding narcotics and the psychedelics of his day, Emerson writes:

This is the reason why bards love wine, mead, narcotics, coffee, tea, opium, the fumes of sandalwood and tobacco, or whatever other procurers of animal exhilaration. All men avail themselves of such means as they can, to add this extraordinary power to their normal powers. (From "The Poet")

However, Emerson makes it clear that he does not condone such artificial means, which he considers to be used by an inferior man. He also deems the results to be imperfect and temporary and imaginary, for in actuality deterioration and dissipation are provoked by reliance on external stimuli.

Never can any advantage be taken of nature by a trick. The spirit of the world, the great calm presence of the Creator, comes not forth to the sorceries of opium or of wine. The sublime vision comes to the pure and simple soul in a clean and chaste body. That is not an inspiration, which we owe to narcotics, but some counterfeit excitement and fury. Milton says that the lyric poet may drink wine and live generously, but the epic poet, he who shall sing of the gods and their descent unto men, must drink water out of a wooden bowl.... His cheerfulness should be the gift of the sunlight; the air should suffice for his inspiration, and he should be tipsy with water. (From "The Poet")

In "The Poet," as in other essays, Emerson is prophesying the great poetic vindicator of his philosophy-- Whitman. Emerson's philosophy draws a great deal on Plato and the Bible, but the English romanticists and German philosophers of the 19th century also find their ways into his works. He envisions the self-reliant man in direct relationship with God, free from all "animal exhilarations" such as narcotics, society, and materialism, and also free from

the intellectual shackles of the Old World, intoxicated instead with "air and water" in the great virgin woods of America. In this way he struck the theme for the transcendental man in America-- and Thoreau and Whitman were to be the most famous embodiments of his vision.

This liberated man is a man free from all encumbrances. He is dependant on no one. He stands alone with his Creator upon the new and fertile American landscape, and he is the epitome of rugged individualism. Emerson's famous "Self Reliance" essay advises in this way:

A man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within, more than the lustre of the firmament of bards and sages.... Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string. (From "Self Reliance")

Later, Whitman was also to exhort his reader to see the direct revelation:

You shall no longer take things at second or third hand, nor look through
the eyes of the dead, nor feed on the spectres in books,
You shall not look through my eyes either, nor take things from me,
You shall listen to all sides and filter them from your self.
(From "Song of Myself," section 2)

Emerson felt that part of man's slavery is due to his attachment to the past-- his functioning on old premises, theories and actions-- in short, his enslavement to karma. Break them off, he advises, and disregard apparent contradictions.

In your metaphysics you have denied personality to the Deity, yet when the devout motions of the soul come, yield to them heart and life, though they should clothe God with shape and color. Leave your theory, as Joseph his coat in the hand of the harlot, and flee. A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. ("Self Reliance")

Abandonment of mundane conceptualization and open acceptance of the infinite diversity of the Creator and His creation are considered by Emerson to be characteristics of the mahatma, the great-souled man. In Whitman's words, "Do I contradict myself?/ Very well then I contradict myself,/ (I am large, I contain multitudes.)" ("Song of Myself," 51) This great souled man has no time for fault-finding, scoffing, argumentation or lamentation. He is blissful,

ecstatic, absorbed in Krishna-consciousness. Nor is he attached to anything on the earth.

Nothing is secure but life, transition, the energizing spirit.... People wish to be settled; only as far as they are unsettled is there any hope for them. (Emerson's "Circles")

This is non-attachment as practised by the free man who does not anchor however calm the waters. For him the universe is not a house for sleepers. It is an open road for travelling souls.

Although the poetic strain is everywhere apparent in Emerson's essays and philosophy, he was not able to completely express his thoughts in his own poetry. This remained for Whitman to do. Emerson did write poems, but he is remembered instead for his essays, which represent him better. Emerson did write a poem called "Brahma," that appears to be influenced by certain verses in the Gita, especially Krishna's injunction: "He who looks on the Self as the slayer, and he who looks on the Self as the slain-- neither of these apprehends aright. The Self slays not nor is slain." (Gita, II/19) Emerson actually paraphrases this verse in "Brahma," his best poem:

(1)

If the red slayer think he slays,
Or if the slain think he is slain,
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep, and pass, and turn again.

(2)

Far or forgot to me is near;
Shadow and sunlight are the same;
The vanished gods to me appear;
And one to me are shame and fame.

(3)

They reckon ill who leave me out;
When me they fly, I am the wings;
I am the doubter and the doubt,
And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.

(4)

The strong gods pine for my abode,
And pine in vain the sacred Seven;
But thou, meek lover of the good!
Find me, and turn thy back on heaven.

That the above poem was influenced by the Bhagavad Gita is not surprising, for it is reported that Emerson's copy of the Gita was more "widely used than the one in the Harvard College Library." No doubt Emerson was fully competent to deliver lectures on Krishna consciousness, but he was not competent to celebrate his great ideas in poetry, for his own poetry is too often stilted and sing-song. And although Henry David Thoreau, Emerson's youthful disciple, also tried verse, the ascetic of Walden Pond is also best remembered for his

Walden and other essays. The poetry of the new God consciousness of 19th century America had to wait for the 1855 "yawp" of another man.

(NEXT ISSUE: KRISHNA CONSCIOUSNESS IN AMERICAN POETRY, Part II: Henry David Thoreau and Emily Dickinson)

SAMSARA BLUES

I got those Samsara blues,
Thinking good or bad? win or lose?
All that smokin' and takin' meth
Just turns the wheel of birth and death.
I'll never attain liberation
By mere sense gratification.
LSD and marijuana
Won't get me to Nirvana,
And meditating on the Void
Only gets me paranoid.
Remembering I'm not this body,
Telling her I'm Brahmachary,
There's really nothing to control
'Cause I'm eternal spirit soul.
Fixed up in Krishna Consciousness,
Who cares about the Maya mess?

So forget that Uncle Sam Thing,
Just keep chanting, chanting, chanting
Hare Krishna Hare Krishna
Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama
Rama Rama Hare Hare.
In material entanglement what calms me?
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami.
Krishna chase away those Samsara blues!
That's what I said.

-- Hari Das Brahmachary
(Harvey Cohen)

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PRINTING: Gargamuni Das Brahmachary (Gregory Scharf)

